

In the Claims:

Please rewrite Claims 1 and 2 to read as follows:

B' 1. (Amended) A process for introducing solutes into dried fruit in order to produce soft dried fruit which comprises:

- (a) providing dried fruit of a moisture content between 5 to 40% or more;
- (b) disrupting the structure of the fruit by one of a mechanical and physical process which is free of any steps that are not physical or mechanical to produce cracks on the surface of the fruit whilst maintaining integrity thereof;
- (c) reacting the fruit with a solute solution containing one or more water activity controlling solutes for a time sufficient to allow solute infusion into the fruit, optionally removing, if necessary, any remnant infusion liquid and thereafter drying the fruit to a desired moisture content and water activity, and optionally,
- (d) treating the surface of the fruit with one or more sugars.

2. (Amended) A process for introducing solutes into dried fruit for the production of soft dried fruit which comprises:

cont
B2

- (a) providing dried fruit of a moisture content between 5% to 40% or more;
- (b) subjecting the dried fruit to a mechanical or physical process which is free of any steps which are not physical or mechanical and causes cracks in the surface of the fruit
- (c) whilst maintaining the essential structure and appearance of the fruit;
- (d) mixing the fruit with a solute solution containing one or more water activity controlling solutes for a time sufficient to allow complete infusion of solute into the fruit;
- (e) removing, if necessary, any remnant infusion liquid and thereafter drying the fruit product to a desired moisture content and water activity; and optionally,
- (f) treating the surface of the fruit with one or more sugars.

Please add the following new Claims 18 and 19:

B2

18. A process according to claim 1 wherein the fruit has a water activity (Aw) between 0.2 and 0.65.

19. A process according to claim 2 wherein the fruit has a water activity (Aw) between 0.2 and 0.65.
